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# National Service: 90 Years of History

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**The American Tradition of Citizen Volunteer Service**





# Citizenship and Service

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**"Our nation became great not because of what the government did, but because of what its people did. ...Money helps but people solve problems."**

***-- George Romney***



**"The health of a democratic society may be measured by the quality of functions performed by private citizens."**

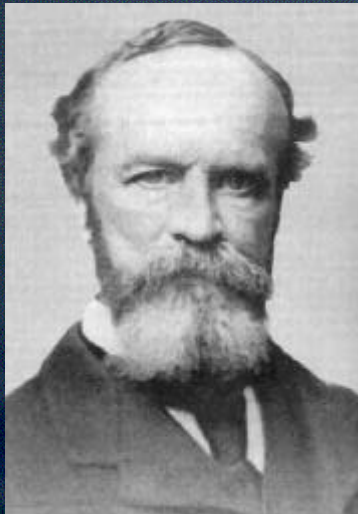
***-- Alexis de Tocqueville***





# 1910 National Service First Proposed

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*William James*

**Non-military national service  
proposed by William James.**

**"... instead of military conscription, a  
conscription of the whole youthful  
population to form - for a certain  
number of years - a part of the army  
enlisted against Nature ... injustice  
would tend to be evened out and  
numerous other goods of the  
Commonwealth would follow."**

*-- The Moral Equivalent of War*

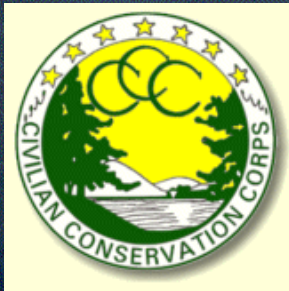




**1933 – 1942**

FDR uses national service to overcome the Great Depression

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**★CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS**  
**Created by Franklin Roosevelt**

**Millions of young men serve of 6-18 months**

**They restore parks, revitalize the economy,  
and support their families and themselves  
with a living allowance.**





1942

Service to nation is rewarded with higher education.

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## ★GI BENEFITS

**The GI Bill links completion of service to country with educational opportunity.**





**1961**

Young Americans called to serve their country and the cause of peace by living and working overseas

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**peace corps** 

**Congress passes authorizing legislation on Sept. 22, 1961.**

**The Purpose...**

★ **To help the people of interested countries and areas in meeting their needs for trained workers;**

★ **To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served; and**

★ **To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.**





1961

peace corps



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**"The wisdom of this  
idea is that someday  
we'll bring it home  
to America."**

*-- President John F. Kennedy*







**1964**

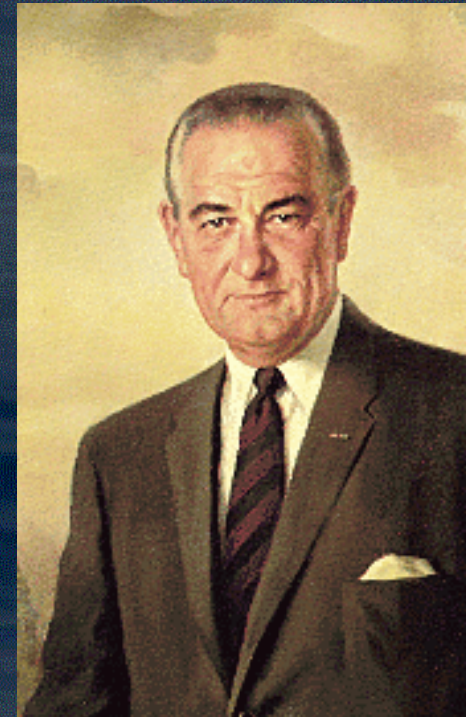
American volunteers called to focus on  
War on Poverty

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**President Johnson creates programs  
that focus volunteers on domestic  
poverty.**

- ★ **National Teacher Corps**
- ★ **Job Corps**
- ★ **University Year of Action**
- ★ **Volunteers in Service to America  
(VISTA)**

**Under VISTA, Americans serve full-  
time helping low-income  
communities.**



*President Lyndon B. Johnson*





*through 1960s*

Service by Older Americans links volunteering and benefits

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**Programs are created to engage older Americans in the work of improving the nation.**

**Today, these comprise the National Senior Service Corps.**



★ **Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)**

★ **Foster Grandparent Program**

★ **Senior Companion Program**





*through 1970s*

Federal Agencies and State Governments replicate service models

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**1970**

★ Youth Conservation Corps engages 38,000 teens aged 14-18 in summer environmental programs.

**1976**

★ California Governor Jerry Brown establishes the California Conservation Corps, the first non-federal youth corps at the state level.

**1978**

★ The Young Adult Conservation Corps creates small conservation corps in the states with 22,500 participants aged 16 - 23.





*through 1980s*

Volunteer Service expands for youth through private sector.

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★ Through colleges and universities ...  
Campus Outreach Opportunity  
League (1984)



Campus Compact (1985)



★ Through replication of youth corps locally...  
National Association of Service and  
Conservation Corps (1985)



★ By promoting youth as volunteers ...  
Youth Service America (1985)





**1989 and 1990**

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**President George Bush**

- ★ **creates the Points of Light Foundation;**
- ★ **establishes the White House Office of National Service.**



**Congress passes and President Bush signs the National and Community Service Act of 1990.**

**It creates**

- ★ **the Commission on National and Community Service;**
- ★ **grant program for service-learning in schools;**
- ★ **demonstration grants for national service by youth corps, nonprofits, schools, and universities.**





**1993**

**National Service Re-authorized and Reformed**

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**Congress passes, and President Clinton signs, the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993.**



**Two federal agencies, ACTION and the Commission on National and Community Service merged.**

**New agency = Corporation for National & Community Service.**

**Programs (ACTION plus new ones) under CNCS:**

**★3 AmeriCorps (VISTA, Crew,**

**National Civilian Community Corps)**

**★3 Senior Corps (RSVP, Foster Grandparents, Senior Companion)**

**★3 Learn & Serve (K-12 school-based, community based, higher ed)**





# *Through 2000*

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- 1994** ★ Congress passes King Holiday and Service Act. Law makes CNCS lead in organizing MLK Day as day of service.  
★ 20,000 volunteers make up first s AmeriCorps member class.
- 1997** ★ Presidents' Summit for America's Future in Philadelphia promotes need for volunteer service to provide Five Promises to American youth.
- 2000** ★ Senior Service Corps celebrates growth to 500,000 adults.  
★ VISTA marks 35 years with total 130,000 members since 1965.  
★ AmeriCorps marks 6th anniversary with total 200,000 members since 1994.





**2002**

## National Service Reauthorization Pending

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★President Bush creates USA Freedom Corps, a policy council in the White House. CNCS is one of six members.

★President unveils “Citizen Service Act 2002” which updates CNCS national service programs.

★CNCS awards Homeland Security grants to local nonprofits and government. Awards constitute the first non-National Service Program grants; the first step toward actualizing the federal mission related to community service.

★House of Representatives’ committee recommends Citizen Service Act “ought to pass” but no action expected before election.

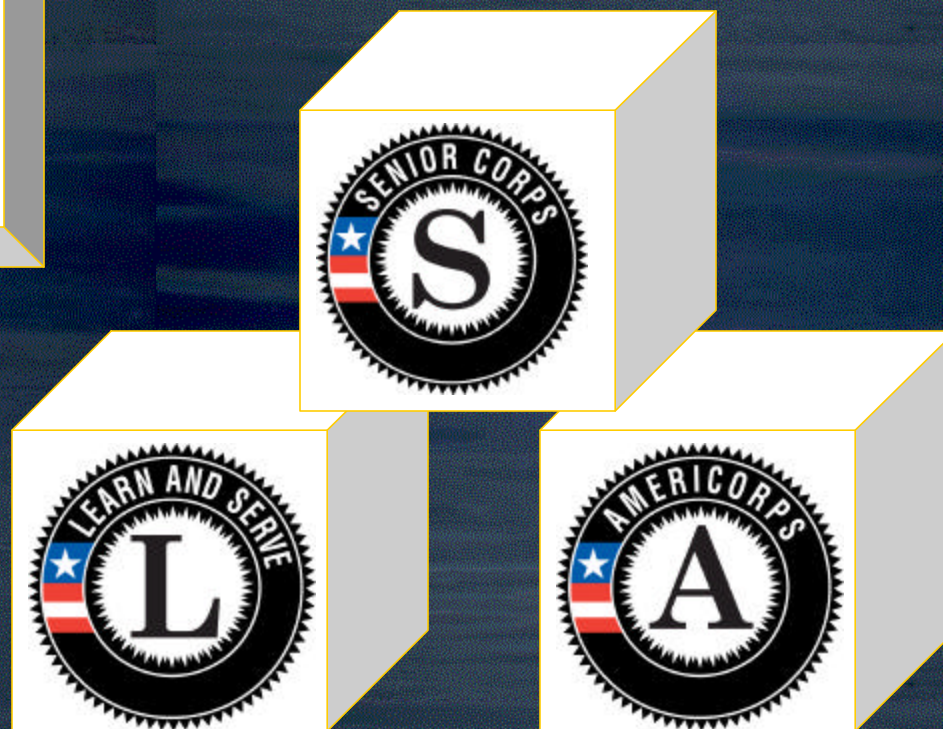




2002

On the lighter side...

★CNCS unveils new logos for itself and all sponsored programs.







## *What it's really about*

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**The "community service movement" can add little to what citizen volunteers already know about community service.**

**The impulse is already there, a tradition that remains at the heart of our citizenry.**

**What the "movement" can provide is the coordination, facilitation, and support that is essential to sustain and fulfill the American voluntary impulse.**

*-- "The Challenge of Community Building"  
Visions of Service (1993: National Women's Law Center)*